

# News & Views

Information For National Wildlife Refuge System Professionals in Region 3  
Volume 2, Number 2 June 27, 2003

## Minnesota Teacher and Students; Michigan DU Biologist Win Wetland Conservation Awards

Kyle Kirkeby, a fourth grade teacher at Ortonville Elementary School in Ortonville, Minn., and his students from 1995-2002 have won the National Wetland Conservation Award (NWCA) in the group/organization category for exceptional wetland conservation activities.

The NWCA program, established by the Service in 1990, honors individuals and groups or corporations for significant contributions to the restoration, enhancement and protection of wetlands in the United States. The awards are presented on the national level and within the Service's geographic regions.

David Brakhage, a biologist with Ducks Unlimited's Great Lakes-Atlantic Region Office in Ann Arbor, Mich., is the regional group winner for the Service's Great Lakes-Big Rivers Region. He was nominated by the Michigan Private Lands Office in East Lansing.

The national award winners will be recognized Tuesday, July 1, during the federal duck stamp's First Day of Sale event in Washington, D.C.

The Morris Wetland Management District (WMD) nominated Kirkeby and his students for the award. The students' enthusiasm and creative methods of raising funds to restore local wetlands and associated native grasslands set them apart from this year's national runner-up in the group category: the National Aquarium in Baltimore, Md.

Kirkeby and his students earned the award through their Trojans Adopt-a-Wetland Restoration program. Since 1995, students in Kirkeby's fourth-grade classes have raised approximately \$8,450 through a variety of creative fund-raising programs, such as selling passes to chew



Photo by Abby Rodriguez

From left: Jim, Bob and Joe Hautman display their "Celebrating a Century" print.

## Hautman Brothers Comemorative Print Celebrates NWRS Centennial

Renowned wildlife artists Jim, Bob and Joe Hautman have collaborated on a special wildlife print to commemorate the 100th birthday of the National Wildlife Refuge System while raising money for wildlife habitat projects in Minnesota. The print, "A Century of Conservation" includes three wildlife scenes representing a significant period in the history of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

The artists joined Regional Director Robyn Thorson, members of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and Friends of the Minnesota Valley to premier the print at the regional office June 10.

Jim Hautman's painting of brown pelicans represents the creation of the first national wildlife refuge at Pelican Island, Florida, in 1903. Bob Hautman's mallard ducks on the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge represent the system's 50th anniversary in 1953. Joe Hautman's painting of an avocet on a federal waterfowl production area represents the system's 100th birthday in 2003.

"A Century of Conservation" is being

produced and distributed by the Hautmans in partnership with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and the Service. Proceeds from the sale of the print will be matched by the Foundation and others to fund federal wildlife habitat restoration projects.

A limited edition of 1,000 signed and numbered prints will be sold. The prints cost \$250 (unframed) and \$400 (framed). Prints are expected to go on sale in mid-to-late July. Details are being worked out now on how and where the prints will be sold. Region 3 refuge staff can get more information on ordering prints from Steve Kufrin at the Regional Office (612-713-5447).

The accomplished artists are the only brothers to win the federal duck stamp contest, having designed seven federal duck stamps and more than 30 state conservation stamps. Their artwork has been displayed in the Oval Office in the White House and at the Smithsonian Institution. The commemorative "Century of Conservation" print is the first time the three Minnesota brothers have collaborated to produce a single work.

Continued on Page 2

From Page 1

## Minnesota Teacher and Students; Michigan DU Biologist Win Wetland Conservation Awards

gum in school, or cookie dough. These modest funds generated more than \$55,000 in matching funds from conservation partners. The funds have been responsible for restoring more than 540 acres of wetlands in Big Stone County in cooperation with the Morris WMD.

These restored resources provide water-quality and flood-control benefits to Big Stone Lake, and the Minnesota River Watershed. Through their involvement, the fourth-grade students have emphasized the importance of restoring habitats for waterfowl, migratory birds and resident wildlife. The students' latest project involved the restoration of the 596-acre Centennial Waterfowl Production Area near Clinton, Minn. Dedicated May 2, this project was done in partnership with Citizens for Big Stone Lake, Upper Minnesota River Watershed District, Big Stone County, Ducks Unlimited, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Duck Unlimited Biologist David Brakhage has been instrumental in developing and administering North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) grants to ensure more acres of wetlands



Photo by Scott Flaherty

Teacher Kyle Kirkeby addresses the audience during the May 2 dedication of the Centennial Waterfowl Production Area.

and grasslands are restored on private lands in southern Michigan.

The restored sites have provided additional nesting, brood-rearing and migration habitats for waterfowl and other wetland-dependent wildlife. They also have contributed to improved water quality in the heavily-populated Great Lakes Watershed by providing habitat buffers to reduce runoff in agricultural counties.

Through his leadership, Brakhage has

brought partners together to develop grant programs for watershed restorations on private and public lands.

Specifically, Brakhage's leadership has resulted in partners spending more than \$1 million on habitat construction to restore at least 4,000 acres of wetlands and associated uplands. These acres have been restored on private lands through the Partners for Fish and Wildlife program.

## Chief's Corner

In May, Don Hultman and staff from the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge briefed the Regional Office staff on the progress of their Comprehensive Conservation Plan. At over 260 miles in length, with over 3.5 million visitors and over one million neighbors, you can imagine how broad and complex the CCP will be when completed. Nearly 1,000 issues and concerns were identified through public meetings and meetings with refuge stakeholders.

What struck me most though were the historical aspects of the refuge. Established in 1924, the Upper Miss has always been popular for hunting, fishing and outdoor recreation. And as stewards of this tremendous resource, project leaders have always struggled to balance public use with resource protection.

In the 1950s, Upper Miss Project Leader Ray Steele and Biologist Dr. Bill "Doc" Green struggled through a public involvement and political process to establish Closed Areas, a process not unlike the CCP process we know today. At issue then were providing a series of 14 waterfowl sanctuaries down the length of the Upper Miss Refuge — a safety net of 41,000 acres. Though difficult, efforts by Ray Steele and Doc Green were completed in 1957 when special regulations were published, and paid huge dividends for waterfowl for decades, just as the work Don and his staff do today will benefit the refuge for the next 15 years and beyond.

We know we won't be on hand for the Refuge System Bicentennial in 2103, and before the full fruition of our CCPs many of us will retire and becoming observers of a System we once managed and guided. Like Ray Steele and Doc Green, we will also leave our own legacy behind.

One theme I took away from the Keystone Conference five years ago was change; how we would all be challenged to think and act in new ways as we implemented the Refuge System Improvement Act and moved the System ahead. While our trust species have not changed, the pressures and hazards faced by those species has changed and will continue to do so. They can't always adapt — so the task of conserving their habitat and environment is ours.

Managers of the 50s didn't have to deal with 4-wheelers, Jet Skis and boats with more horsepower than a Service pick-up truck. Likewise, underwater cameras, GPS units, and even something as simple as a handheld calculator so common today were fantasies of the future for earlier managers.

We have all been challenged to mitigate the pressures faced by our trust species and stations today. And it may be unrealistic to think we can account for future pressures which don't even yet exist. But with the Act, our CCP framework, and the experience and dedication each of us applies to the task, we too can look back on a proud legacy.



# News, Notes and Jottings

## **Activity-Based Costing (ABC)**

Despite the frustration (and really poor timing) involved, we all survived the fits and starts which came with piloting the new ABC program. Most field stations completed their surveys the week of May 26, as did the Regional Office staff. It's difficult to say what the future holds in store for ABC, but with nearly daily changes in direction, emphasis and format during the rollout, it's a safe bet the next version of ABC you see will be quite different than the one we worked on in May and early June. At this writing, future plans included a much shorter list of activities (down from 200+), and quarterly reporting. Stay tuned.

## **Celebrating a Century of Conservation**

The year of the Centennial continues to tick away. At the same time, we continue to amass an impressive tally of successful Centennial events. Regional Office staff members recently attended events at Ottawa NWR, Detroit River IWR, Neal Smith NWR, Shiawassee NWR, Leopold WMD, and Windom WMD, where the featured trumpeter swan release, replete with specially-deputized "Swan Release Teams" (a.k.a. local youth) was a tremendous hit. Nothing like spring on the prairie.

## **Roll Your Own RONS**

Most stations are on board now with accessing RONS on-line via your userid and password. RONS has been down for updating by WO since June 2 and is set to return July 1. Following July 1, Tier II will be open again for editing, adding, deleting, and re-ranking. You might want to do so quarterly. Does Tier II ever get funded? Yep. We regularly receive calls for projects when earmarked \$\$\$ come into play. Unfortunately, Tier I remains frozen tighter than the garage door lock at Hamden Slough in January.

## **Travel Woes**

Yep, we got 'em. Probably time to take the long view on travel and other budget restrictions, which will likely be with us for at least another year. A recent reshuffling of the numbers (among all programs) in the Regional Office resulted in a redistribution of funds for PCS moves and local travel. Your refuge supervisor has the specifics.

## **Geo What?**

The latest outdoor trend melds techies and trekkiies. Geocaching ["geo cash-ing"] is a growing international sport which involves the placement of a cache, usually on public land, which is sought by "treasure hunters" using hand-held GPS units. The caches, which usually consist of a waterproof 5-gallon bucket or ammo box, contain a variety of items; common items include books, software, jewelry, maps, games, tools, etc. At a minimum, caches each contain a log book. Successful cache hunters are allowed to take and leave something. The Geocaching website should be a stop for every LE officer, Public Use Specialist and Refuge Manager. Go to the website <http://www.geocaching.com> (actually a good site) and enter your location. The site will tell you the cache nearest you. Who knows, there may already be a cache on your station.

Savvy readers will note geocaching is NOT one of the big six, wildlife-dependent activities. The placement of caches on NWRS lands represents the deposition of contraband and is not allowed. Thanks to Tracy Casselman for passing on this information.

## **Thanks Arkansas!**

A man fishing in a lagoon a few miles from Lake Michigan recently landed an Asian bighead carp, an invasive species that can wipe out fish in the bottom of the food chain. The angler caught the 38-pound carp in the McKinley Park Lagoon, an isolated, man-made 7-acre pond in Chicago. Biologists suspect the fish was released by someone into the pond. The possibility of Asian carp and other invasive species overtaking the Great Lakes is a concern because the carp, which can grow to weigh 100 pounds, can decimate the population of smaller fish that sustain lake trout, salmon and other larger fish. Arkansas catfish farmers imported Asian carp, which moved into the Mississippi River during flooding in the 1990s. From there, the fish migrated to the Illinois River. Last year, the Army Corps of Engineers created an electrical barrier to stop Asian carp from advancing into Lake Michigan, but during tests, the electric barrier has not been totally effective.

The Great Lakes watershed is home to

more than 160 invasive species. Nationwide, invasive species were blamed for \$137 billion in economic losses in 2000. Closer to home, a Nebraska State record 47.5 pound bighead carp was caught at DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge last May by an 11 year old on 4 lb. test line.

## **Cute and Cuddly**

The growing monkeypox outbreak, which has infected 50 people in the Midwest and is believed to have stemmed from an imported African rat, has caused a call for federal action. Authorities have traced the recent monkeypox episode in three Midwestern states to exposure of pet prairie dogs to an infected Gambian rat imported from Africa. In an effort to stymie the virus, some states have issued emergency bans on the sale of prairie dogs as pets.

Critics blame weak regulations for the problem and have called for further federal intervention. The Fish and Wildlife Service oversees endangered species imports and the Department of Agriculture has authority over animals that might introduce agricultural disease. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention oversees importing animals — including dogs, cats, turtles and primate — that can pose a human disease risk.

## **Brother, can you spare a dime?**

The California State Assembly is considering a "sin tax" of ten cents per round on all ammunition sold in California. Other activities paying "sin taxes" include smoking, drinking and gambling. Should this bill pass, it would increase the price of a 50-round box of ammunition by five dollars per box, i.e., a \$1 box of .22 ammunition would increase to \$6 per box. Would also likely impact Pittman-Robertson revenues.

## **More Whoopers for Necedah**

A flock of whooping crane chicks were delivered by private airplane to Necedah NWR June 19. A team from Operation Migration, Inc., the International Crane Foundation and the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center will spend the summer conditioning the chicks to fly behind ultralight aircraft. The team will guide the young cranes to Chassahowitzka NWR in Florida this fall.

## Big MuddyNWR, External Affairs, Support Outdoor Writers Conference

The Big Muddy National Fish and Wildlife Refuge joined External Affairs staff from Region 3 and Washington offices to support activities at the 76th annual Outdoor Writers of America Conference held June 14-18 in Columbia, Mo.

The Big Muddy Sponsored the National Junior Duck Stamp display and worked with Bass Pro Shops and conference coordinators to organize a presentation of the \$1,000 cash award to the Missouri Junior Duck Stamp Best of Show winner. The award was presented during the Ducks Unlimited sponsored press conference June 15.

## Minnesota Valley NWR Joins Partners to Introduce Inner City Youths to Fishing

Minnesota Valley NWR hosted its 13th annual Youth Fishing Day at the Bass Ponds Environmental Study Area June 7. The day-long event was a tremendous success. During the morning, 150 inner city children were bused in for a day of fun, fishing and learning.

The kids attended nine learning stations, which included an electro-shocking demonstration, fish handling and ethics, rods-reels-lures and fish habitat. They also spent two hours fishing with rods donated by the Minneapolis Foundation and Ron Schara's Castaways for Kids program.

The Red Lake Nation provided lunch for those attending the morning event, and General Mills donated fishing rods for the kids to take home. The event would not have been possible without the more than 100 volunteers who pitched in to make this event a great success.

Refuge partner groups included Red lake Nation, Red Lake DNR, Gander Mountain, General Mills, American Express, Richfield Optimist Club, Degree of Honor Life Insurance, Coca-Cola, Outdoor Heritage Education Center, Minnesota DNR, Galyan's, Pepsi, McDonald's, Southern Teaser Tail, Cypress, 1854 Authority, Friends of Minnesota Valley, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Minneapolis Foundation, Ron Schara's Castaway's for Kids, Walmart Corporation and the Egan, Minn., Walmart store.

## Minnesota Governor Pawlenty Supports Proposed Glacial Ridge NWR

In a May 7 letter to Secretary of Interior Gale Norton, Governor Tim Pawlenty urged the establishment of the 32,000 acre Glacial Ridge National Wildlife Refuge in Polk County. In the letter, Governor Pawlenty said, "Glacial Ridge can provide increased education, hunting and recreation opportunities while becoming one of the most important and visited prairie sites in the nation." Currently, Glacial Ridge is owned by the Minnesota Chapter of the Nature Conservancy who is working with more than 25 local, state and federal government agencies, along with non-profit conservation groups on the largest prairie restoration project in history. Designation as a National Wildlife Refuge will allow the Fish and Wildlife Service to obtain ownership of the property and begin conservation management designed to improve wildlife habitat, hydrology and recreational opportunities for the public. The Governor added that, "Establishing the Glacial Ridge National Wildlife Refuge will benefit our community, economy and environment. This is a historic opportunity to preserve one of our most cherished natural resources for generations to come." (Governor Pawlenty's Office)

## Refuge Centennial Medals Available From U.S. Mint

In honor of the National Wildlife Refuge System Centennial, the U.S. Mint, in partnership with the Service and National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, is producing and selling a commemorative medal series to "Celebrate a Century of Conservation!"

The silver medal commemorative series has a common obverse depicting President Theodore Roosevelt. The four reverses feature either a bald eagle, an elk, salmon or canvasback ducks. A bronze duplicate of the silver bald eagle will also be produced.

More information about the medal series is available at the U.S. Mint's website. You can also order the medals at the site: <http://catalog.usmint.gov>



## National Zoo's Eagle Exhibit Comemorates Refuge Centennial

On Friday, July 4, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Friends of the National Zoo (FONZ) will host Bald Eagle Refuge Day to celebrate the opening of the Smithsonian National Zoo's newest exhibit. Bald Eagle Refuge Day, is part of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's yearlong celebration commemorating the 100th anniversary of the National Wildlife Refuge System. The event is free and will feature a variety of educational and entertaining family activities.

In addition to the new bald eagles, the event activities will focus on several zoo animals whose wild counterparts inhabit National Wildlife Refuges across the country. These include endangered brown pelicans (Pelican Island NWR, Florida), endangered Mexican wolves (Sevillita NWR, New Mexico), and beavers (Patuxent NWR, Maryland). Interpretive stations located at each respective exhibit will provide information about these species and the refuges they inhabit, and will include animal artifacts and demos. Participants will be given a map of the featured refuges. (ENN)

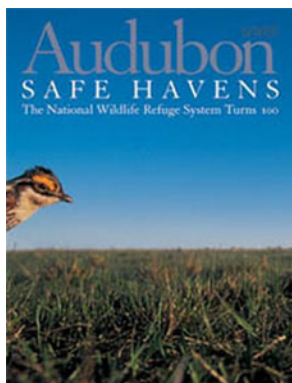


# Horicon NWR Among Audubon Magazine's "Other Crown Jewels"

*June's Special Issue Promotes Refuge Centennial*

Region 3's **Horicon National Wildlife Refuge** was named one of the "Other Crown Jewels" of the National Wildlife Refuge System this month by Audubon Magazine. Audubon editors selected their top 10 refuges based on accessibility and visitor friendliness.

Others listed include the **National Bison Range** near Missoula, Montana; **Upper Souris NWR** in north central North Dakota; **Okefenokee NWR** in southeast Georgia-northern Florida; **Laguna Atascosa NWR** near Brownsville, Texas; **Parker River NWR** near Boston, Mass; **Chincoteague NWR** on the Atlantic coasts of Maryland and Virginia; **Bosque del Apache NWR** in central New Mexico; **Don Edwards San Francisco Bay NWR** in California and **Kenai NWR** in Alaska. The list headlines the June issue of Audubon Magazine, only the fifth special issue in the magazine's history.



The magazine features other stories relating to the refuge system. Stories are available online at: <http://magazine.audubon.org/index.html>

The ranking was part of Audubon's effort to celebrate and promote the Centennial of the National Wildlife Refuge System and invites readers to explore other

parts of the 95 million acre refuge system.

Other stories in the June issue include: "A Century of Progress" by Frank Graham Jr., ticking off refuge milestones; "The Second Century" by Ted Williams, addressing challenges the system faces in the next 100 years; and "Labor of Love" by Jennifer Bogo, documenting countless hours of behind-the-scenes work by volunteers to restore and protect their local refuges. As Bogo points out, their efforts are vital to keeping the massive refuge system afloat in a world of decreasing resources.

## Proposed Bill Aims to Reduce Maintenance Backlog on Refuges

A House Resources subcommittee will take up two bills related to national wildlife refuges, including a measure to reduce the backlog of needed repairs, at a hearing set for June 26.

Rep. Mark Souder's (R-Ind.) **H.R. 1204** would amend the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act to fund capital projects and maintenance in refuges a little differently. Currently, the refuge system faces a maintenance, construction and staffing backlog. Concessionaire facilities are given low priority for maintenance and construction. H.R. 1204 says that should the concessionaire maintain or repair any structure within the refuge, FWS will treat the costs of the maintenance or repair as compensation for using the facilities. The bill would also require FWS to develop standard contract language for use with concessionaires.

The House passed a similar bill last session, but it never moved out of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee.

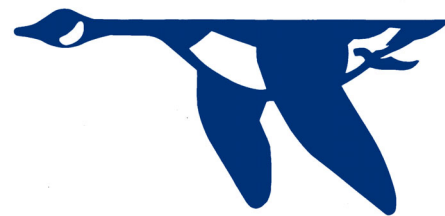
Rep. Wayne Gilchrest's (R-Md.) Fisheries Subcommittee will also hear testimony on **H.R. 2408**, which would authorize \$2 million annually through 2009 for volunteer programs and community partnerships. (Environment and Energy Daily)



Senator Chuck Grassley (center) poses for a group photo with DeSoto refuge staff.

## Iowa's Senator Grassley Tours DeSoto NWR

Iowa Senator Chuck Grassley visited DeSoto NWR May 29 during his tour of Iowa. The Senator states he works hard to give Iowans a voice in Washington by touring each of Iowa's 99 counties every year. After a short introduction to the staff of DeSoto, the Senator and his assistant, Donna Barry, were given a tour of the Bertrand Collection and refuge visitor center.



## New Map of Refuge System Available From USGS

Nationalatlas.gov™ and USFWS have helped create a new map showing the National Wildlife Refuge System. View the map at: [http://nationalatlas.gov/nwrna63\\_100dpi.html](http://nationalatlas.gov/nwrna63_100dpi.html)

The Refuge System map measures 28-by 32-inches and is available from the USGS for \$7.00 plus shipping and handling fees. Please use stock number 113787 when ordering. You can order the map online or by sending an email to [infoservices@usgs.gov](mailto:infoservices@usgs.gov).